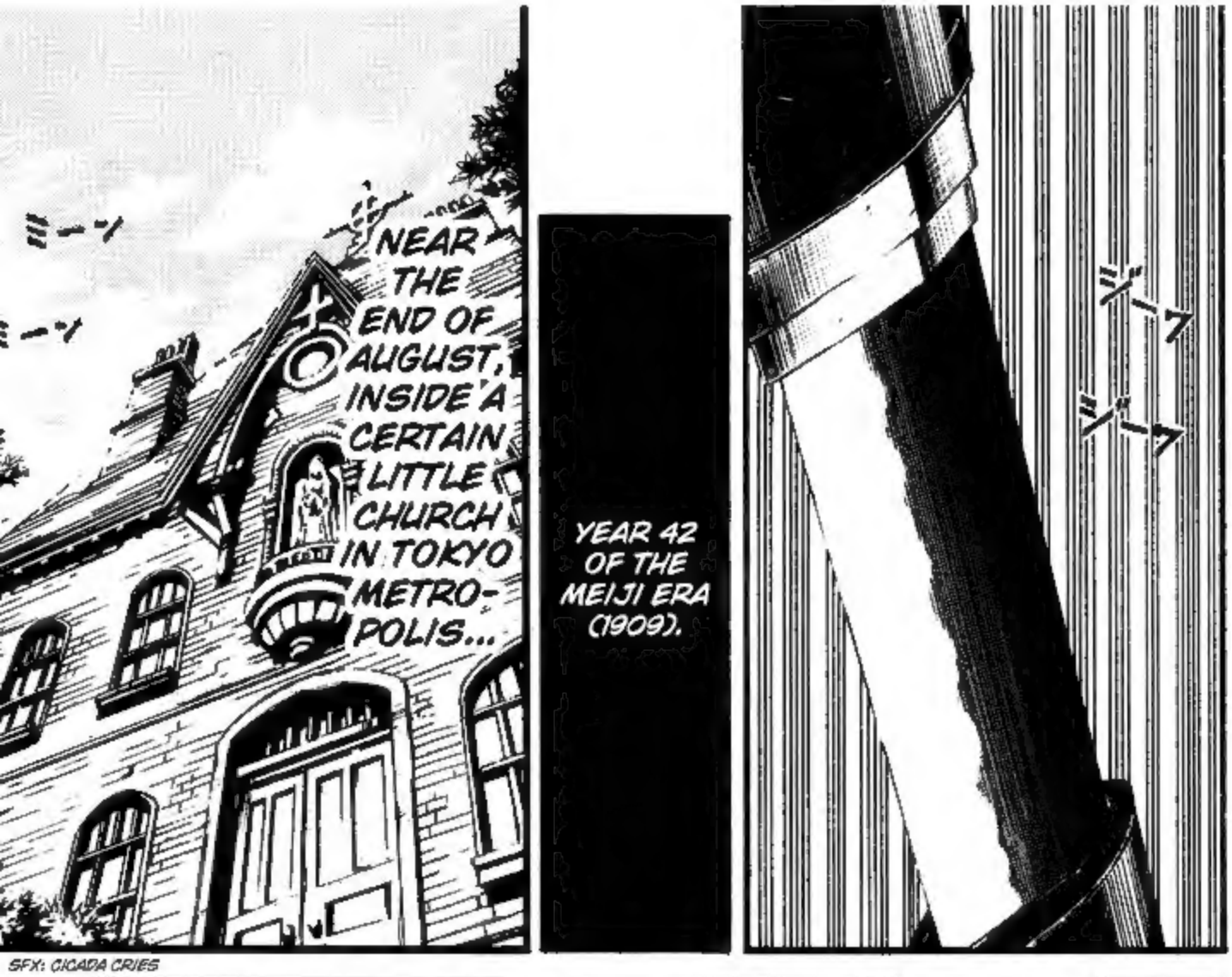

SFX: CICADA CRIES

ACT 22
DOLL FRANCINE

DOLL FRAN-CINE.
I AM FRAN-CINE.
JUST AS YOU SAY.

WITH MY WIFE ANGE-LINA?!
WHAT DO YOU WANT...
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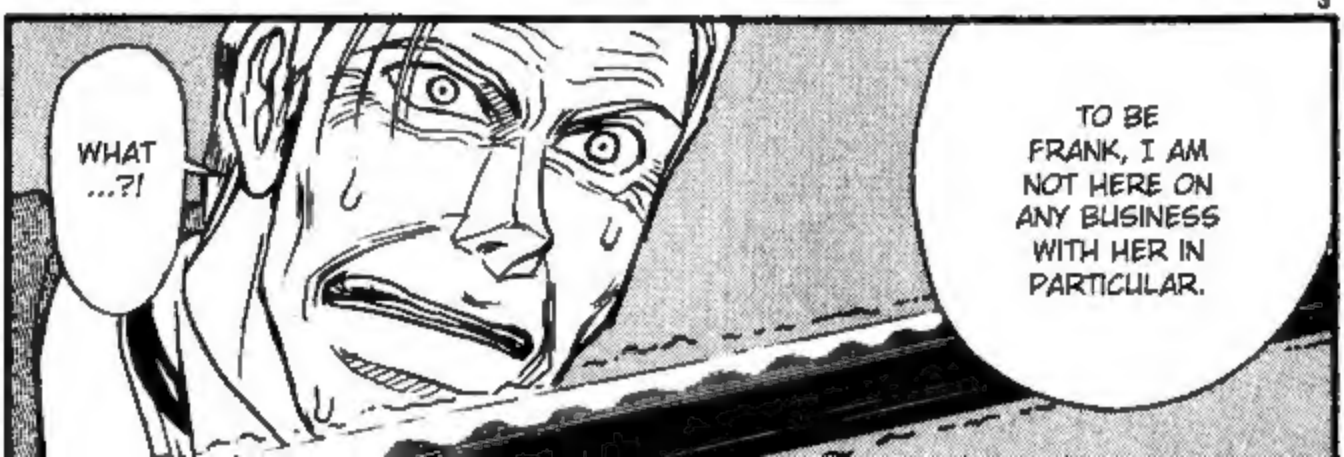
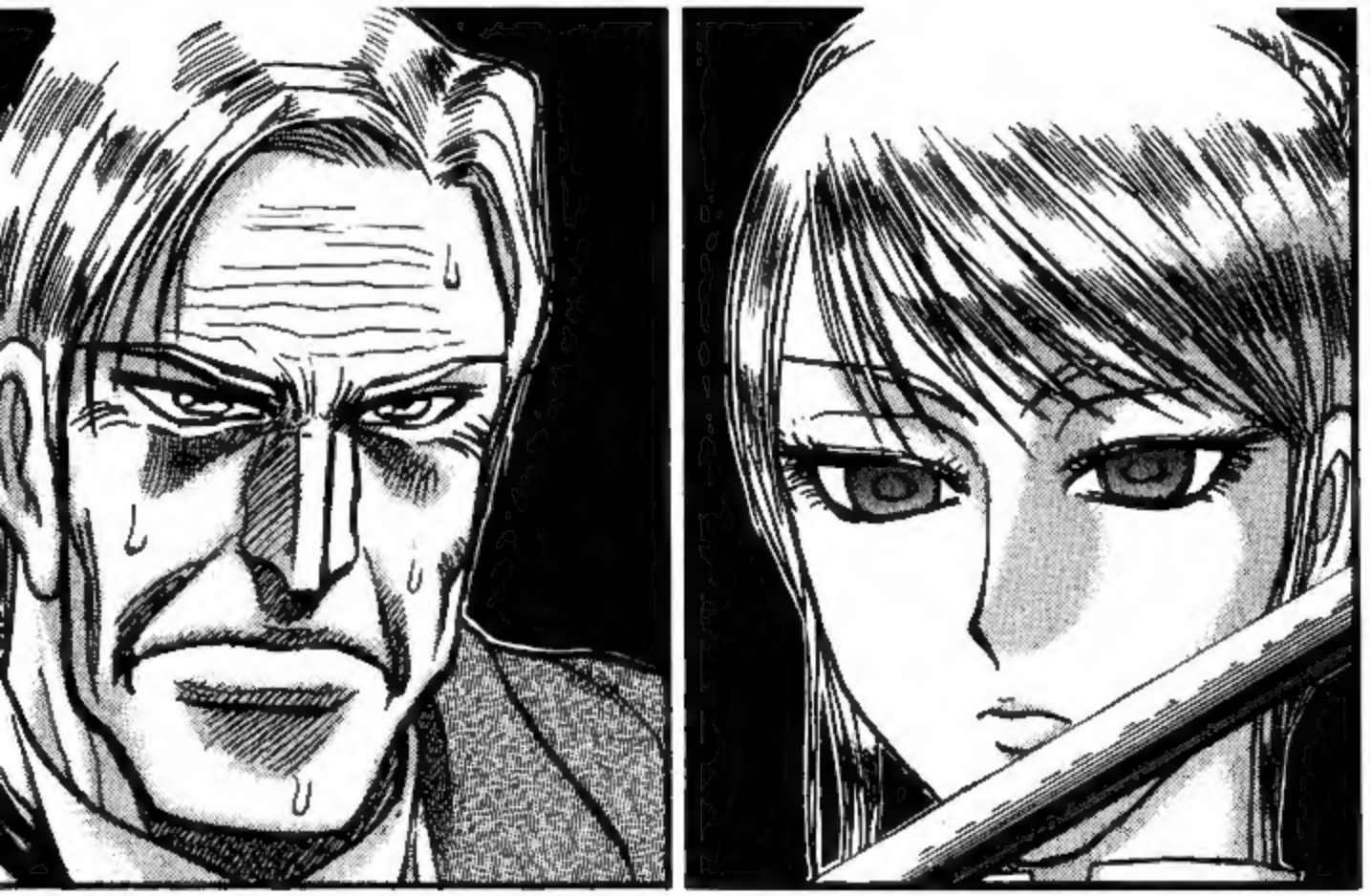
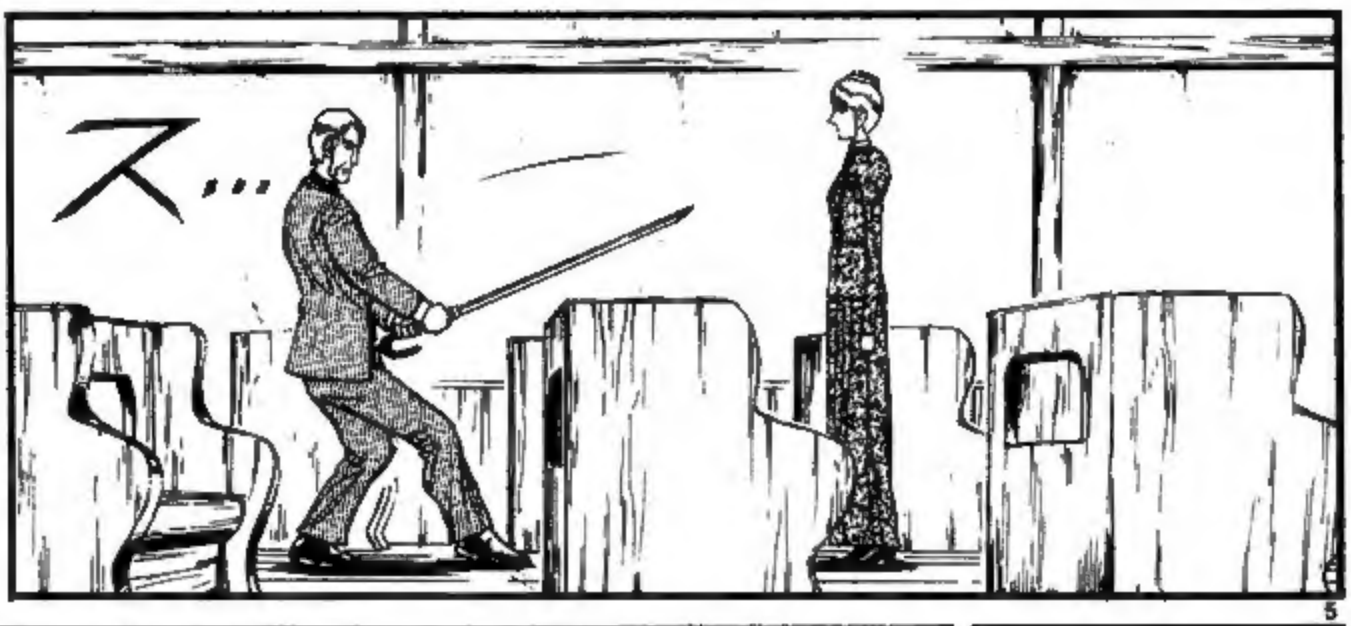

WHAT ...?!
TO BE FRANK, I AM NOT HERE ON ANY BUSINESS WITH HER IN PARTICULAR.

I CAME HERE TO HAVE MY BODY DISMANTLED. IT MATTERS NOT WHO DOES THE DEED.
IF YOU ARE THE ONE WHO BUILDS THE SHIROGANE THEIR MARIONETTES, THEN IT WILL DO JUST AS WELL...
FOR YOU TO DESTROY ME RIGHT HERE.
WHAT ARE YOU SCHEMING ...?
DO YOU REALLY THINK I'LL BELIEVE THE WORDS OF THE ALTOMATA'S LEADER SO EASILY!?
CUT OFF MY HEAD, THEN. RIGHT NOW, WITH THIS SWORD.




Z...

TELL ME!
WHAT REASON DOES THE LEADER OF THOSE DEMONIC MOVING DOLLS HAVE TO SEEK HER OWN END?

BUT IF YOU HAVE NO HIDDEN PURPOSE HERE...
THIS DOESN'T MEAN I TRUST YOU.

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YES. I'VE ALREADY LET YOU DISMANTLE ME TO THIS DEGREE, AFTER ALL...

ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO LET ME DO THIS?

THEN I'LL BEGIN BY DOWN-GRADING YOUR STRENGTH AND SPEED TO A HUMAN LEVEL.
DO AS YOU SEE FIT.

MY BODY IS THE HIGHEST ACHIEVEMENT OF MY CREATOR'S SACRED ART. I AM INCAPABLE OF TOUCHING ITS INTERIOR.
HAVE NO FEAR THAT I MAY REPAIR THESE CHANGES.
CUTTING THE STEEL WIRES ...
DISCONNECTING THE ARM AND LEG JOINTS FROM THEIR GEARS, LOOSENING THE SCREWS ...
YES, I CAN SEE THAT THE ONE WHO BUILT YOU WAS A MASTER OF HIS CRAFT.
カチャ
SACRED ART, YOU CALL IT...

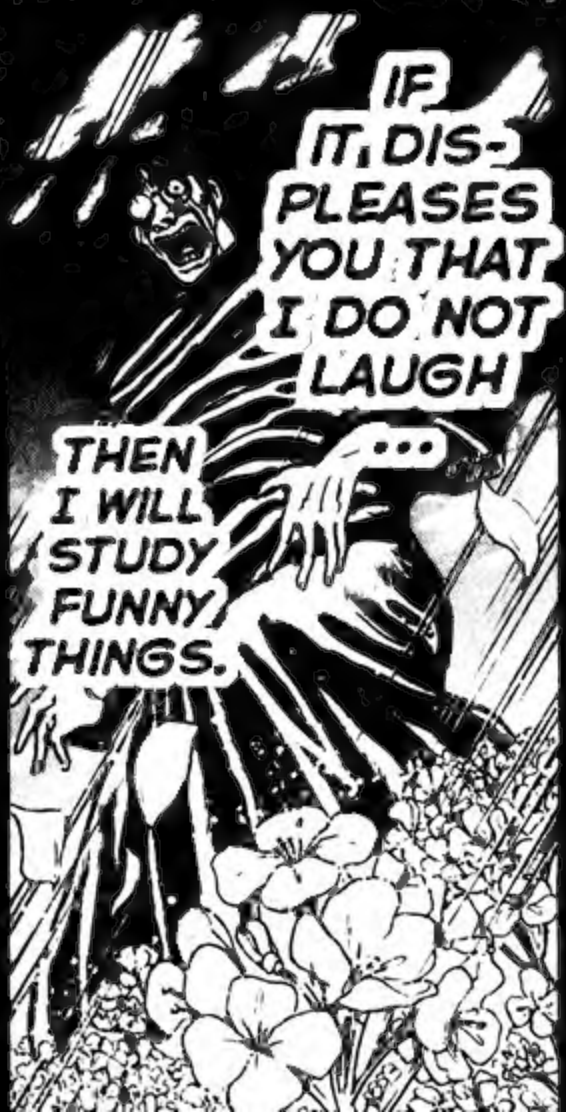
ヒヨオオオオ
WOULD NOT KEEP ME BY HIS SIDE.
BUT MY CREATOR...
YES.

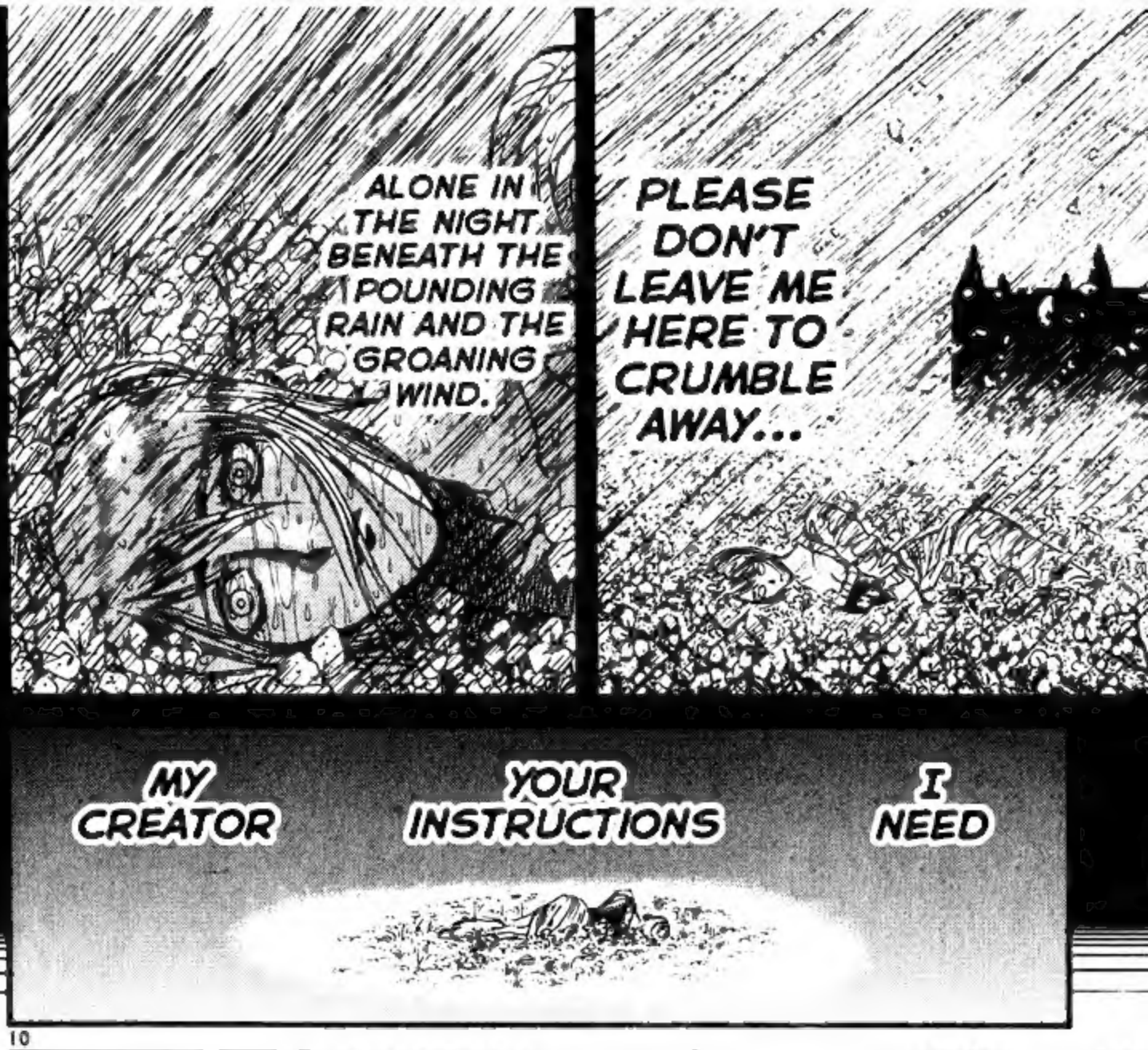
YOU ARE NOT FRAN-CINE!
YOU WOULDN'T LAUGH FOR ME!
8
GOODBYE, FALSE FRANCINE!
GOOD-BYE, DOLL!
DOES THIS HURT?! IT SHOULD! TOY YOU MAY BE, BUT I BUILT YOU TO DRAW BREATH JUST LIKE FRANCINE!
YOU'RE JUST A SOUL-LESS TOY!

CREA-
TOR!!

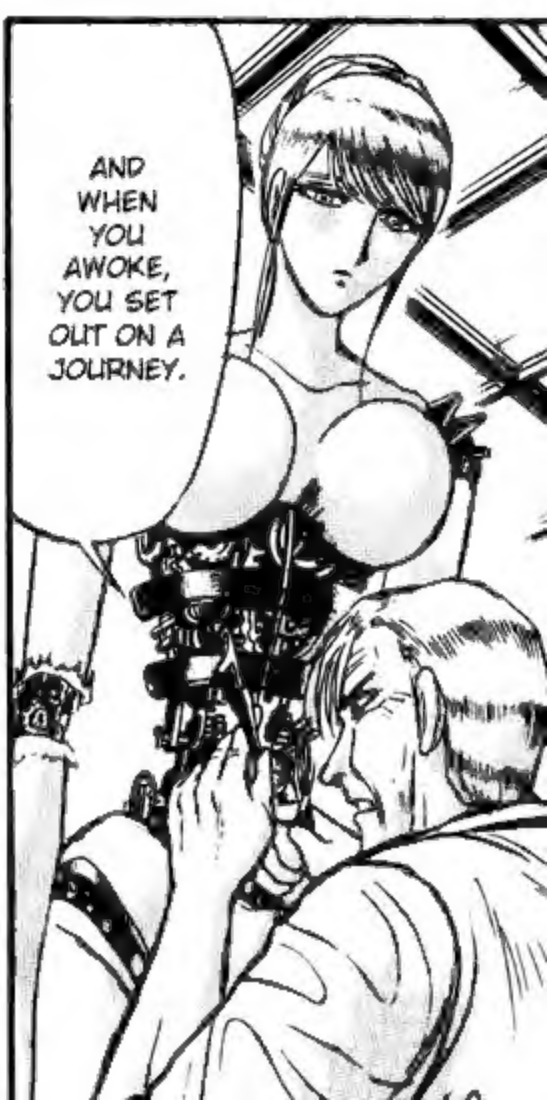
PLEASE DON'T ABANDON ME.

PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE IN THIS FIELD OF MUSTARD BLOSSOMS.


IF IT DIS-PLEASES YOU THAT I DO NOT LAUGH
THEN I WILL STUDY FUNNY THINGS.


ALONE IN THE NIGHT BENEATH THE POUNDING RAIN AND THE GROANING WIND.
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME HERE TO CRUMBLE AWAY...
MY CREATOR
YOUR INSTRUCTIONS
I NEED

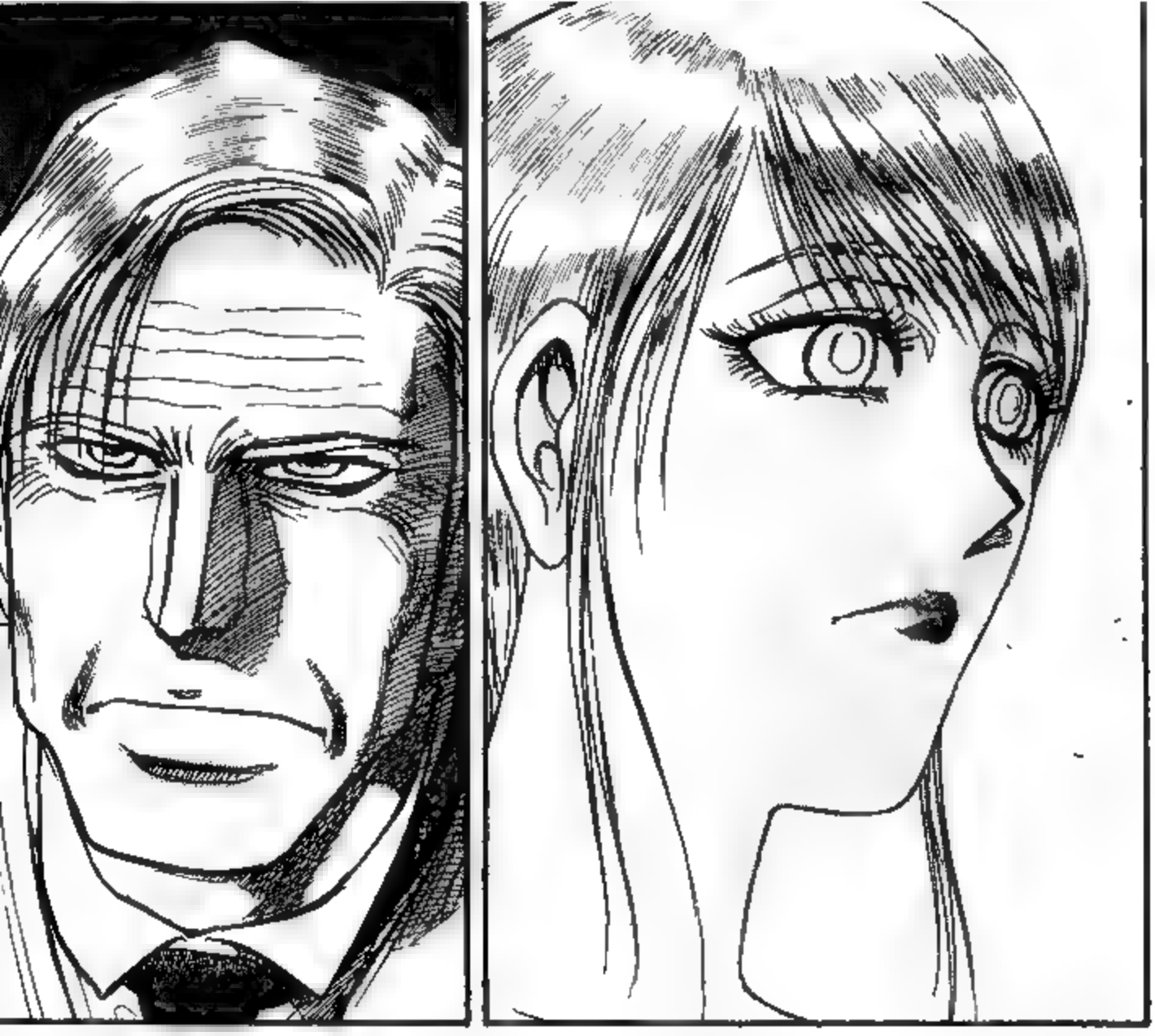
THE REASON MY CREATOR LEFT ME WAS THAT I COULD NOT LAUGH. MY AIM WAS TO CHANGE THAT.
YES.

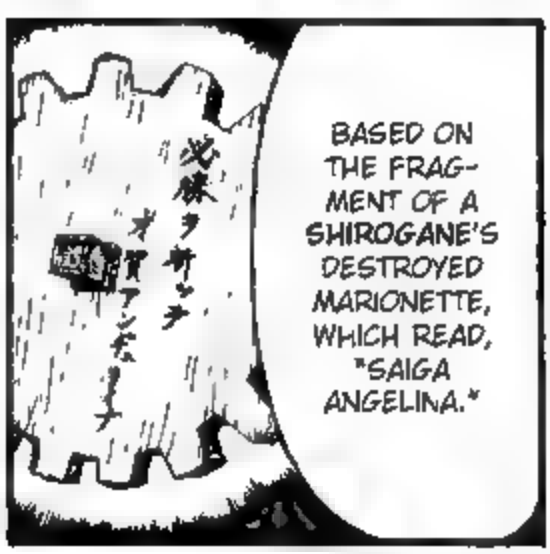

AND WHEN YOU AWOKE, YOU SET OUT ON A JOURNEY.

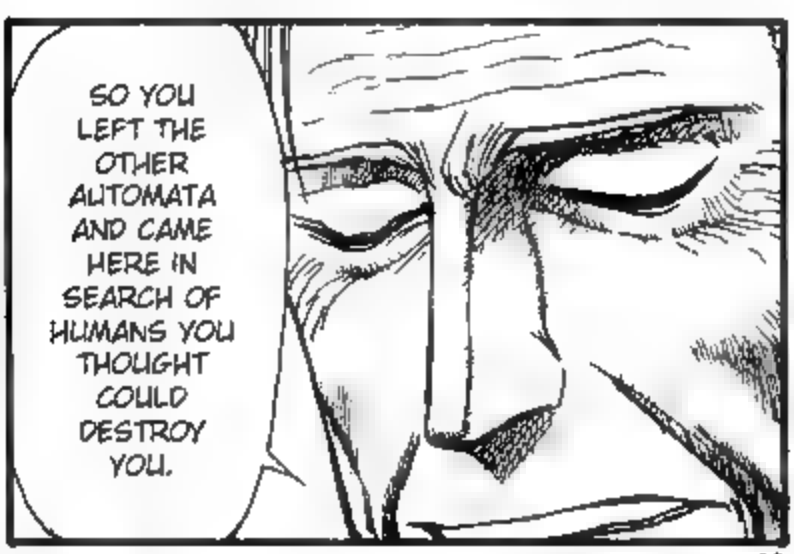
I STUDIED ALCHEMY FROM THE BOOKS AND NOTES MY CREATOR LEFT BEHIND, AND USED THAT TO REVIVE THEM.
THE FOUR AUTOMATA TRAVELED WITH ME.
PLEASE COME WITH ME, AND SEARCH FOR THIS METHOD.
IF I AM ABLE TO LAUGH, OUR CREATOR WILL SURELY RETURN TO ME.
I AM SETTING OUT ON A JOURNEY TO DISCOVER A WAY TO LAUGH.
THE AUTOMATA'S ONLY GOAL WAS TO MAKE ME LAUGH.
WE BUILT MANY OTHER COMPANIONS OVER THE LONG YEARS ...
AND TRAVELED ON IN OUR SEARCH.

DID WE FIND A WAY.
BUT NEVER, IN THAT JOURNEY OF TWO HUNDRED YEARS...

NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE MADE HUMANS SUFFER.
NO MATTER HOW BIZARRE THE FORMS OF THE DOLLS WHO DANCED BEFORE ME.
IS THE WORD YOU HUMANS USE.
TIRED, I BELIEVE...
I AM...
I FOUND NOTHING FUNNY.
BUT EVEN AFTER TWO HUNDRED YEARS...
THE AUTOMATA TRIED CONSTANTLY TO MAKE ME LAUGH OR SMILE.



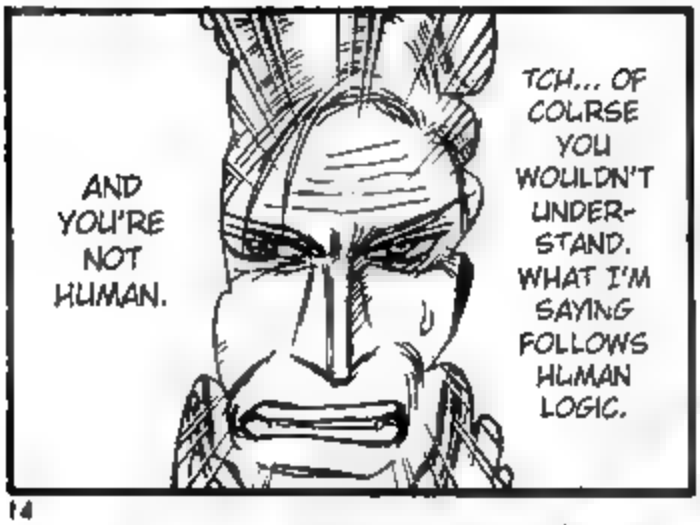

BASED ON THE FRAG-MENT OF A SHIROGANE'S DESTROYED MARIONETTE, WHICH READ, "SAIGA ANGELINA."


SO YOU LEFT THE OTHER AUTOMATA AND CAME HERE IN SEARCH OF HUMANS YOU THOUGHT COULD DESTROY YOU.

AND RIGHT NOW...

SO I KNOW JUST WHAT KIND OF TERRIBLE THINGS YOU CREATURES HAVE DONE TO HUMANS.
I INHERITED SHIROGANE'S MEMORIES AFTER DRINKING AQUA VITAE.

I'M ITCHING TO TEACH YOU, WITH THESE VERY HANDS...
JUST HOW MISGUIDED AND SELFISH THOSE DEEDS WERE!


AND YOU'RE NOT HUMAN.
TCH... OF COURSE YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT I'M SAYING FOLLOWS HUMAN LOGIC.

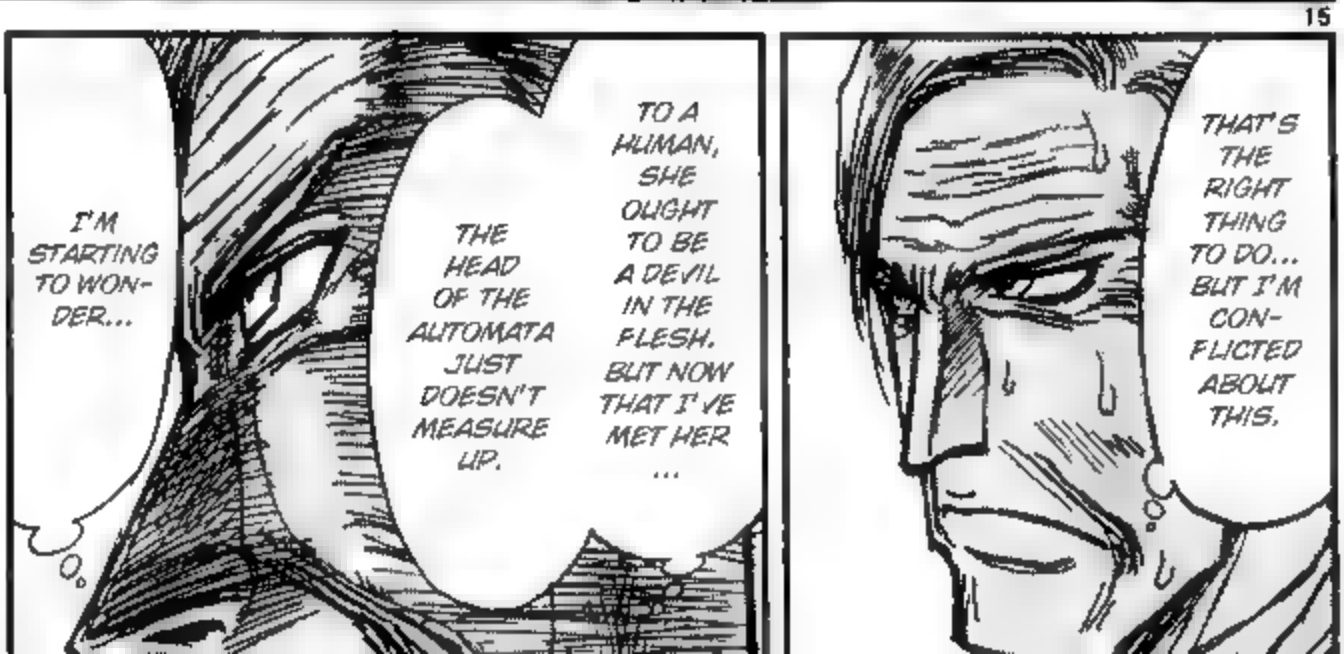
WHATEVER DO YOU MEAN?
MISGUIDED? SELFISH?

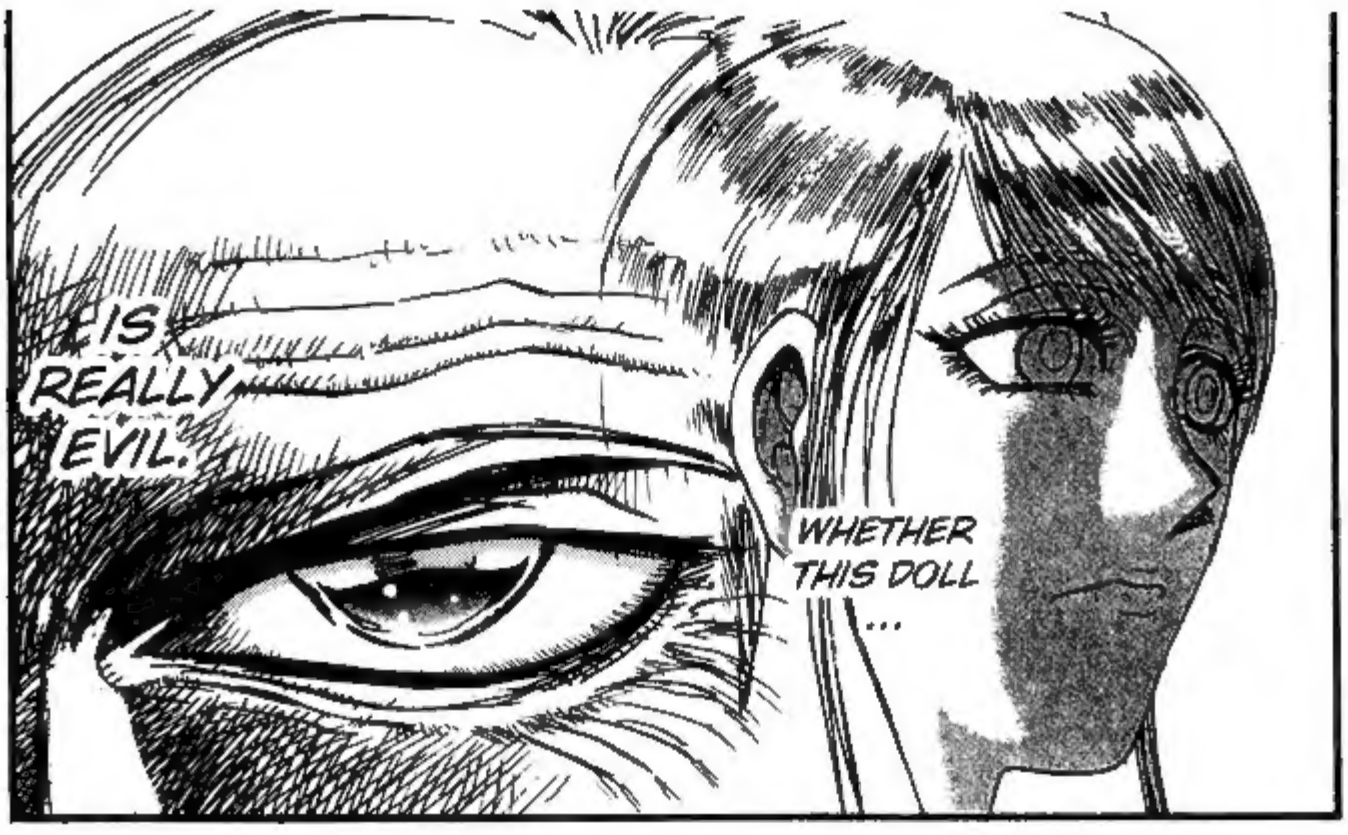
I NEVER HAD THE ZONAPHA SYNDROME THAT YOU AND YOUR DOLLS SPREAD.

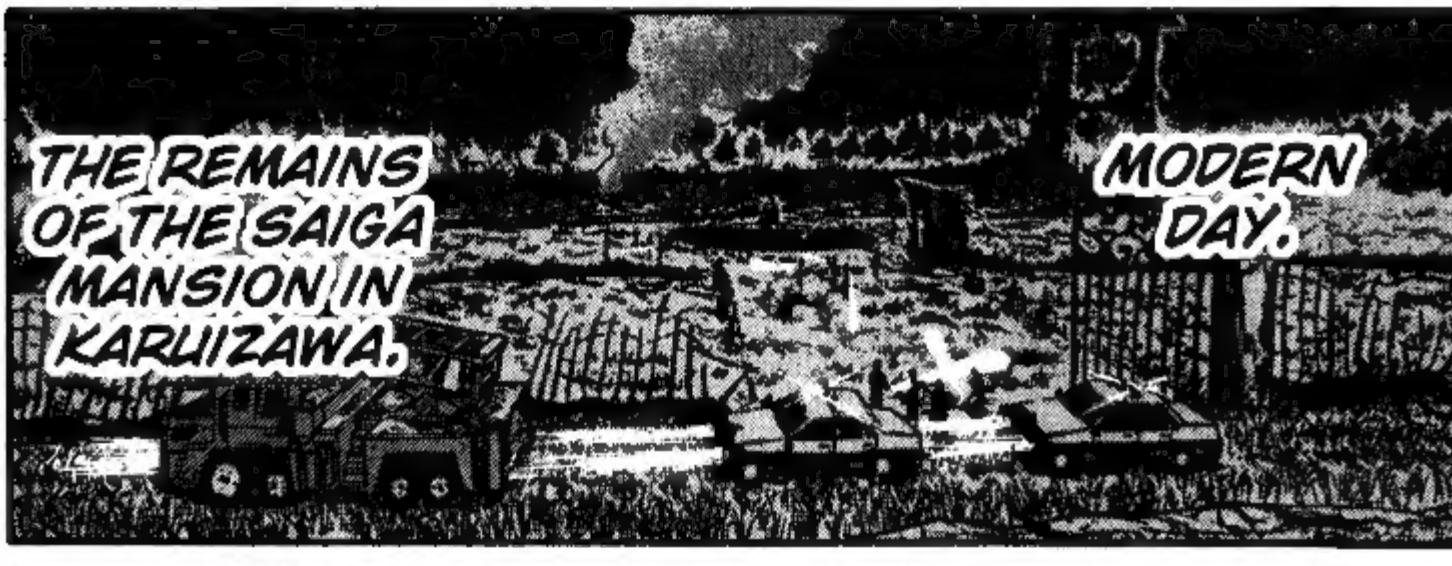
WHAT IS THE REASON YOU WILL NOT DISMANTLE ME HERE?

THE ALTERATIONS ARE FINISHED! YOU HAVE NO MORE STRENGTH THAN AN ORDINARY HUMAN NOW!

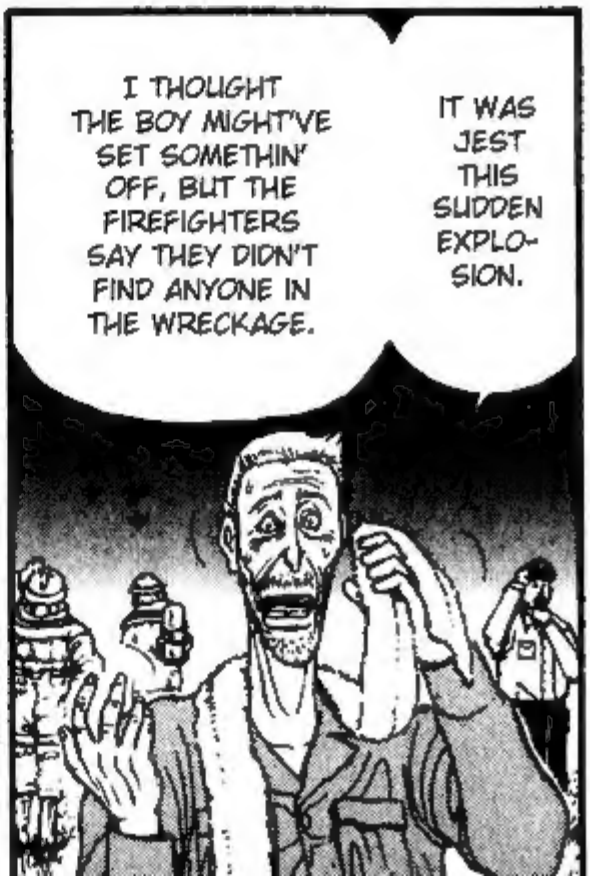
WHAT IS TO BECOME OF ME, THEN...?
ONLY SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THAT PAIN...
IS FIT TO PASS THE JUDGMENT YOU DESERVE.
I'M GOING TO HAND YOU OVER TO ANGELINA IN KUROGA VILLAGE.


I'M STARTING TO WONDER...
THE HEAD OF THE AUTOMATA JUST DOESN'T MEASURE UP.
TO A HUMAN, SHE OUGHT TO BE A DEVIL IN THE FLESH. BUT NOW THAT I'VE MET HER ...
THAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO... BUT I'M CONFLICTED ABOUT THIS.


IS REALLY EVIL.
WHETHER THIS DOLL ...


THE REMAINS OF THE SAIGA MANSION IN KARUIZAWA.
MODERN DAY.

I DID MAKE A CALL T'THE HEAD OF KUROGA VILLAGE EARLIER—BUT I CAN'T MAKE HEAD NOR TAIL OF THIS WHOLE AFFAIR.


I THOUGHT THE BOY MIGHT'VE SET SOMETHIN' OFF, BUT THE FIREFIGHTERS SAY THEY DIDN'T FIND ANYONE IN THE WRECKAGE.
IT WAS JEST THIS SUDDEN EXPLO-SION.

I SEE. THANK YOU.

MASARU CAME HERE...
AND FOUGHT WITH PUP-PETEERS FROM KUROGA VILLAGE.
IF THERE WAS NO BODY, THAT COULD MEAN THEY'VE TAKEN HIM.
KUROGA VILLAGE, EH?

MODERN DAY, A FEW HOURS LATER: KUROGA VILLAGE.

KUROGA VILLAGE ...
IT MUST BE NINETY YEARS SINCE I LAST CAME CALLING HERE.
パチン
YOU KNOW, MAMAN ...
THAT WAS ALSO WHEN I FIRST MET YOU.

I'D COME TO CARRY OUT A MISSION FOR THE SHIROGANE ...
NOT TODAY, THOUGH, MAMAN.

THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO... 1909, ALL THE WAY BACK IN THE MEIJI ERA.

translation by funnuraba.tumblr.com

NOTES:

pg. 16-18: Guy drove to a place called Kuroga Village, if you didn't catch the name.

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Thanks to Judash137 on the mangafox forums for removing the Japanese text, and to the anonymous person who tipped me off to that!

Any group with more experience or skill is welcome to take over at any time or to redo chapters I have already done if they are below the quality that this series deserves.